

Myth #6

The 2002 Farm Bill shortchanges conservation.

FACT #6

The 2002 Farm Bill provides over \$39 billion for conservation — the highest level of funding in history for conservation programs that prevent soil erosion, preserve and restore wetlands, clean the air and water, and enhance wildlife.

The 2002 Farm Bill sets a record high for conservation funding – about 80% higher than the record level set under the 1996 Farm Bill.

Voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs authorized under the 2002 Farm Bill are the most successful and popular environmental programs in the United States, saving millions of acres from soil erosion, enhancing water and air quality, and promoting wetland and wildlife habitat restoration and preservation - creating a boon for wildlife populations.

By helping highly efficient and productive American farming operations, U.S. farm policy also protects millions of acres of wildlands in the Third World where low efficiency, low productivity agriculture would otherwise increase.

As Nobel Laureate Norman Borlaug noted in *The Wall Street Journal*, dated May 13, 2002, the modern production practices of U.S. farmers have "...had a dramatic conservation effect: saving millions of acres of wildlands all over the Third World from being cleared for more low-yield crops." Borlaug added that but for these advances in agriculture, "...at least half of today's 16 million square miles of global forest would already have been plowed down, and the rest would be scheduled for destruction in the next three decades."

U.S. farm policy's help to farm families also inherently contributes to a cleaner environment by "decoupling" benefits from production so farmers have flexibility to dedicate their land to the agricultural or conserving use that's best for soil and water quality on their land.

The 2002 Farm Bill funds conservation programs at their highest levels in history while sustaining U.S. production agriculture that has helped save millions of acres of wildlands in the Third World.

